

## **OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE MINUTES**

**March 4, 2010  
Newington Town Hall  
7:00 P.M.**

### **I. Roll Call**

Chairman Bowen convened the meeting at 7:00 pm. The following members were present: Mr. Nagel, Mrs. Nasinnyk, Mr. Lenares, Ms. Wojtowicz, Mrs. Conway, Mr. Bottalico, Mrs. Anest and Mr. Block.

Town Planner, Ed Meehan

### **II. Minutes February 18, 2010 (postponed to March 18)**

### **III. Public Participation**

Mr. Michael Fox was present. No comments.

### **IV. New Business – Subcommittee Reports**

#### **A. Land Trust Subcommittee**

Ms. Wojtowicz reported that the subcommittee met with John Schansky, a member of the West Hartford Land Trust. Some of the suggestions to be considered to initiate the creation of a Newington Land Trust are:

- Begin the communication process with Town Council, TPZ and Conservation Commission concerning the role of the land trust as an advocate for open space and partner with Town government.
- Involve the Town Council in land trust creation, possibly request financial assistance to retain legal and professional accounting assistance.
- Reach out to local legal and accounting professionals for possible “pro bono” services to assist with land trust incorporation.
- Further explore the services of the Land Trust Alliance for their expertise in creating land trust and beneficial cost sharing programs such as insurance.

Mr. Bottalico questioned if it was typical for municipal governments to be the initial funding source and technical assistance advisors creating the local land trust.

It was concluded that the subcommittee would work on drafting a report summarizing the pros and cons of a land trust, outline the steps and potential incorporation costs.

## B. Open Space Grants Subcommittee

Mr. Meehan reported that the 2010 round of DEP Open Space grant awards requires applications to be submitted by May 3, 2010.

A required component of the grant application will be two (2) appraisal reports of the property proposed for acquisition. A second requirement is the identification of “other funds” that will be used to acquire the property. If a municipality intends to use its funds the Town Council must by resolution commit to provide this financing. And third DEP expects funded applicants to be able to close on the acquired open space property within one (1) year of grant award.

Chairman Bowen reported that Cedar Mountain property owners have not responded to his February 11, 2010 letters and the lead time to prepare the appraisal reports and their costs, estimated at \$12,000 to \$13,000 should be considered. Most importantly, the property to be appraised must be agreed upon.

Mr. Block moved that the Committee contact the Town Council and request that at their March 23, 2010 meeting funding for the grant appraisal be approved. Seconded by Mrs. Conway and approved.

## C. Other Open Space Properties Subcommittee

Mr. Bottalico reported that he and Mr. Marcinczyk met with Ed Meehan and reviewed private vacant properties throughout the Town. Ed Meehan presented three (3) maps:

- (1) Vacant private properties, approximately 685 acres, 8% of Newington’s land area.
- (2) Vacant land by type – residential 342 acres and non-residential 343 acres.
- (3) Vacant land by type and environmental limitations (wetlands, waterways, flood hazard) – approximately 433 acres, 63%, are non buildable. Estimated useable vacant land remaining is 252 acres, equally divided between residential and non-residential properties.

Mr. Meehan further reported that the potential residential lot build out of the useable vacant properties is approximately 125 to 135 single family home sites. This is a speculative estimate based on assumptions for roadways and in the case of the largest R-20 property, owned by Balf Company, deducting acreage because of steep westerly slope areas.

Mr. Meehan presented three aerial shots maps of Cedar Mountain range. Mr. Bowen requested Mr. Meehan to explain the non buildable steep slope areas of Cedar Crest Hospital. Based on the topography mapping most of the westerly side of Cedar Crest Hospital, approximately 40 acres, is over steep over 15% slope with some sections at 40% slope.

**V. Public Participation**

None

**VI. Remarks by Committee Members**

Mrs. Nasinnyk reported that the CIP Committee completed its 2011 budget proposal. No funding has been identified for open space properties.

Mr. Block asked what the Committee members felt about Mr. Pappa's suggestions for public – private partnerships to acquire and protect open space by selling carbon credits or for alternate energy sites such as wind power or solar.

The consensus of the Committee was that these are creative innovative concepts but beyond the purview of their mission.

**VII. Adjournment**

Adjournment at 8:36 p.m.

Submitted,

Edmund J. Meehan  
Town Planner

Town Clerk  
Town Website